

# ACHIEVING RESULTS

## Office of Ecosystems and Communities

Fiscal Year 2002

*The Office of Ecosystems and Communities (ECO) applies a holistic, community-based approach to achieve results that align with Regional priorities. Following is a sampling of what we accomplished this year.*

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### ECO Delivered Effective Community Involvement By:

- Providing vital support in Regional priority areas:
  - **Coeur d'Alene Basin:** Hosted eight formal public meetings and helped respond to more than 3,000 public comments enabling long-term cleanup to begin in 2003.
  - **Upper Columbia River Basin:** Organized several public meetings to give residents a voice in listing contaminated areas on the National Priorities List.
  - **Agricultural Burning:** Facilitated multi-agency, pre-burn season meetings and helped finalize findings from Agricultural Burning Forums to develop a Regional approach to minimizing health effects of burning.
  - **Portland Harbor:** Helped organize a citizens advisory group representing local business, environmentalists, and residents.
- Facilitating meetings to help the Water Temperature Guidance Project complete guidance for public review.
- Providing materials on the Lower Duwamish Waterway in Spanish for Hispanic residents, and communicating risks of eating fish through a Spanish language radio broadcast.

### ECO Targeted Geographic Areas By:

- Leading an interagency effort that completed a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for total dissolved gas on the lower Columbia River and a preliminary draft TMDL for temperature on the Columbia and lower Snake rivers.
  - Protecting and restoring more than 4,000 acres of aquatic habitat under EPA-sponsored National Estuary Programs for Puget Sound, Tillamook Bay, and the Lower Columbia River.
  - Working with the drinking water program to seek alternatives and minimize impacts from a proposed BPA transmission line through the Cedar River Watershed. BPA has since made several mitigation commitments, including protecting 640 acres of land.
  - Working through the NEPA process with U.S. BLM to change the design for the Idaho Smoky Canyon phosphate mine. The new design ensures selenium and cadmium in groundwater do not exceed Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs).
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## **ECO Made Effective Use of Enforcement Tools By:**

- Conducting 69 wetland enforcement inspections that resulted in critical restoration and mitigation. ECO collected \$27,000 in penalties, and negotiated a supplemental environmental restoration project valued at \$142,000.
- Conducting 23 pesticide inspections, resulting in four administrative complaints and three final orders. ECO issued five stop sale/use/removal orders, 72 warning letters, and two notices of refusal of entry of pesticides into the United States.

## **ECO Built Capacity For Tribes, States and Local Governments By:**

- Helping the Idaho Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund fund nonpoint source projects in addition to traditional point source projects, providing the State with sustainable funding.
- Providing over \$600,000 to state and local governments for watershed and wetland protection projects. One result is the Oregon Agate Desert wetland conservation plan now specifies mitigation of 1,700 acres, and identifies four endangered species reserves.
- Providing over \$400,000 to eight tribes to implement wetland conservation plans. For example, ECO support enabled the Jamestown S'kallam Tribe to develop a comprehensive monitoring plan for restoration of the Jimmycomelately Creek and Estuary, which will serve as a model for other watersheds.

## **ECO Built Important Partnerships By:**

- Signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Region 8 and the U.S. Forest Service to collaborate on preparing an EIS for revisions to the Idaho Panhandle and Kootenai National Forest plans covering 4.7 million acres. This work should serve as a model for plans and EISs for 24 national forests.
- Cosponsoring 15 watershed workshops with states and the Army Corps to teach watershed groups and conservation districts how to leverage resources and obtain funding.
- Helping form the Northwest Regional Dredging Team, which serves as a central policy authority and facilitates decision-making on dredging and sediment projects across the Northwest.

### **Place-Based Staff Solved Environmental Problems By:**

- Helping Union County in Oregon manage smoke from agricultural burning and forest fires. ECO initiated a local health advisory, worked with the county to improve air monitoring to determine when to restrict burning, helped create a centralized call-in center, and worked with farmers to increase direct seeding.
- Collaborating with Oregon DEQ to develop a 2-year mercury monitoring project for the Willamette River, which will contribute to development of a TMDL for mercury and other pollutants.
- Providing assistance in Pocatello, Idaho on projects such as the FMC Phosphate Plant, Eastern Michaud Flats cleanup, and TMDLs through new place-based staffer, Sue Skinner.
- Initiating seven agricultural partnership projects, which will reduce the use of toxic pesticides from 20 to 60 percent on farms in Washington and Oregon. This is part of the Region's work to transition from harmful broad spectrum pesticides to less harmful alternatives.
- Supporting watershed projects in four communities on the Kenai Peninsula. On one project, place-based staff helped Port Graham Village incorporate wetland conservation guidelines into its land management policy.